

Edinburgh, 30th May 1721.

R. D. B.

THE late General Assembly of this National Church had under their serious Consideration the abounding of Immorality and

agreed upon an Act, Copies whereof for every Parish in your Bounds are sent inclosed, which you are desired to cause intimate from the Pulpits of all the Churches within your Presbytery, with suitable Exhortations, as you will see by the said Act it self.

As to Popery, the Assembly have humbly address'd His Majesty in that Matter; and a large Memorial concerning the same, is sent with the foresaid Address, holding forth the Growth of Popery, and giving an Account of many Instances thereof; and humbly praying, the Government may take this under Consideration, and provide suitable Remedies: And in the mean Time, Care is taken for the Encouragement of Protestant Ministers in those Places. And 'tis hoped, Presbyteries will remember what has been often recommended to them in this Matter, particularly by the 4th Act of the General Assembly *Anno 1719*, and Letters from the Commission since that Time; and follow the Directions there given. And it is agreed, that *Probationers* be employ'd to travel in diverse Places where Popery abounds; and to go from House to House to instruct People: But there being few fit Persons having the *Irish Language*, to be employ'd as Ministers, Preachers, Catechists and Schoolmasters, for instructing People, in those Parts, in the Principles of the true Religion, and shewing them the Evil and Danger of Popery, it is necessary, That all Care be taken to encourage hopeful Yuths who have that Language; and therefore 'tis resolved, that such be preferred to Bursaries. And 'tis recommended to all Synods and Presbyteries, to send in to the Commission in November next, an Account who are their Bursars; when their Time runs out; and if any be vacant, to acquaint the Commission thereof.

The General Assembly spent much time in Consideration of the Address and Representation of Twelve Brethren of this Church, with relation to the Book intituled; *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*; and the Act of the General Assembly *Anno 1720*, condemning divers Passages in that Book; and have very harmoniously, Four or Five excepted, strictly prohibited and discharged all the Ministers of this National Church, to use by Writing, Printing, Preaching, Catechising, or otherwise Teaching, either publickly or privately, the Propositions censured in their Act, or what may be equivalent to them, or of like Tendency, under the Pain of the Censures of the Church, conform to the Merit of their Offence; and have ordained the several Presbyteries, Synods, and Commissions of the General Assemblies of this Church, to take particular Care that the Premises be punctually observed by all Ministers and Members of this Church; and more especially the Presbyteries and Synods within whose Bounds any of the foresaid Twelve Brethren reside, who signed the foresaid Representation: And considering, that the Desire of those Brethren, *That the Act Anno 1720 should be repeal'd*, was judged unjust, the General Assembly did refuse the same: And, because of the injurious Reflections contain'd in their Representation, the General Assembly appointed their Moderator, in their Name, to rebuke and admonish those Brethren, which was done; and tho' their Offence deserved a much higher Censure, yet the Assembly did forbear it, in hopes that the great Lenity used towards them shall engage them to a more dutiful Behaviour in Time coming. Presbyteries and Synods are also required *timeously* to call for the printed Acts of the General Assembly, and there you will find more fully the Judgment of this Church in the above Affair, and how to regulate

your

your selves in that Matter. So few of the Acts of Assembly are call'd for, that the Printers thereof, finding themselfes Losers, did last Year refuse to print any more; which reflects upon our Church; and divers Ministers, and inferior Church Judicatories, are at a Disadvantage for want of them.

Upon Report of the Visiters of Synod-books, it was found, That many do not observe what is ordained by the 4th Act of the General Assembly Anno 1713, intituled, *Act containing Directions to the Visiters of Synod-books*, nor the Acts therein-mentioned; and therefore the late General Assembly did require Synods and Presbyteries to read these Acts, and see to the punctual Observation thereof, in all Points; and see that the foresaid Directions, with any new ones made since, be written upon every Presbytery-book within their Bounds; and the Visiters of Books are ordain'd to read the same, and report, wherein those concerned are deficient in the Matters therein-mention'd.

The Collector of the Contribution for the suffering Protestants in *Lithuania*, brought in his Accounts to the General Assembly; and the same having been revised by a Committee, were approven: And it was found, that all the Presbyteries in *Scotland* had sent in more or les, except Two; and that the Sum collected amounted to L. 4289 : 0 : 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ Sterling Money, which had been all remitted according to the Order of the Synod of *Lithuania*, as appeared by Documents produced, excepting the Expences, the Exchange, and the Sum of L 9 : 2 : 0 Sterling of Balance; which Balance the Assembly ordain'd to be paid to a *Polonian* Student of Divinity at the College of *Edinburgh*, and the Assembly had Letters of Thanks from the foresaid Synod. It being informed, That there was some more Money collected, for the End foresaid, than what had yet come to the Collector's Hand; the General Assembly do desire all who have collected any of that Money, forthwith to send in the same to the Collector: And, if they fail therein, he is to pursue for it; and 'tis hoped those concerned will take Warning, and not suffer a Prosecution in such a Case.

The General Assembly finding, That tho' many Presbyteries had shewed true Christian Charity, in sending in liberal Contributions for the *French Protestant Refugees* in *Hildeburghausen*, and for new Erections in *Duirness* in *Strathnaver*, yet many are deficient in this Matter: It is therefore earnestly intreated, That Presbyteries, Office-bearers in the House of God, and other Members of this Church, may seriously lay to Heart what is represented in the Acts of Assembly, recommending these necessary Contributions. And now, when we enjoy such Tranquillity and Plenty of Gospel Ordinances, and valuable Privileges, we may shew a Christian Sympathy with those who have not the like Mercies: And, if any want the Acts of Assembly for these Collections, they are desired to acquaint the Agent for the Church, and he will send more Copies to them. And it is desired, that the Collections for those at *Hildeburghausen* may be sent in to Captain *Martin* of *Airies*, Collector thereof, at *Edinburgh*, betwixt and *August* next; and that the same be intimate prior to any other.

There is annexed hereunto a List of the Members of the Commission, this Year, within your Bounds; and you are desired to cause acquaint them to attend the Diets thereof, the second *Wednesdays* of *August*, *November* and *March*, according to their Commission, and Acts of Assembly anent their Attendance thereon. These are signified to you by,

R. D. B.

Your affectionate Brother and Servant in the Lord,

Will. Mitchell M.A.